

# Summary Report

QUANTITATIVE DATA

a seat  
at the

table

# Conversations Create New Possibilities

Nearly two years ago, Bozeman Area Community Foundation and Future West, alongside a steering committee began to convene a group of nonprofits around how state and federal budget cuts, compounded by community growth, was affecting nonprofits' work.

Each month, the conversation began to grow. Brilliant ideas were being sparked through these conversations. It became clear that the conversation we were having with nonprofits needed to be occurring all around the community - we could not be insular. What did we love about this place? What are challenges that we're facing? What are solutions that we bring to the table around these challenges?

It was through this desire to better understand the challenges people of Gallatin County face, learn about their ideas to improve their communities, and help create more engaged citizens - especially those who aren't typically engaged - that we initiated *A Seat at the Table*.



This was not a new idea. Inspired by the *On the Table* program initiated in 2013 by The Chicago Community Trust to promote civic engagement, the Knight Foundation has invested over three million dollars over three years to expand the idea in ten communities across the country. The Knight Foundation had previously worked with Gallup polling to find out what makes a successful community. They found that citizen attachment to the community is a crucial component of community success.

*A Seat at the Table* was a simple idea but one that took a lot to accomplish. In one day, our entire county would come together over mealtime conversations in small groups to discuss how to collaboratively build and maintain strong, safe and dynamic communities. Without the financial support of Gallatin County, the City of Bozeman, the City of Belgrade and several other supporters, we could not have accomplished our goal.

In actuality, these conversations took place over a two-week period in the latter part of October 2018 with over 100 volunteers hosting “tables” in homes, faith communities, schools, nonprofits, detention center, and on and on. Over 900 people across the county participated in small group conversations and hosts and participants alike filled out a survey to capture thoughts and ideas.

**In today’s world, this act of coming together has never been more important. Talking – and listening – to our neighbors is an important first step toward creating a more connected and engaged community. We can create better plans for a better future when residents, organizations, businesses, and government work together to make contributions that add up to greater solutions than we can achieve individually.**

# Methods and Results

The quantitative and qualitative data was voluminous. Partnership with the HELPS Lab and Amber Raile, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Management and Director of Business Communication Curriculum in the Jake Jobs College of Business & Entrepreneurship at Montana State University was essential in compiling this report and the summary qualitative data report.

Going forward, the steering committee will make in-person presentations to our city and county leaders and interested non-profit partners to help inform their strategic plans and growth policy processes.

## **Seat at the Table Conversations Hosts posed three questions to participants:**

- 1. What do you love most about your community?**
- 2. What are the most pressing challenges in your community?**
- 3. What are your ideas for making your community better?**

Over 100 tables and 900 community members participated. Overwhelmingly, participants love living in our beautiful location and value the plentiful recreational opportunities and open space in a friendly, safe community. Community members want to participate in preserving what they love about the area through responsible growth while making sure living here is affordable for everyone.

After their conversations, both hosts and community member participants described their discussions and opinions through surveys.

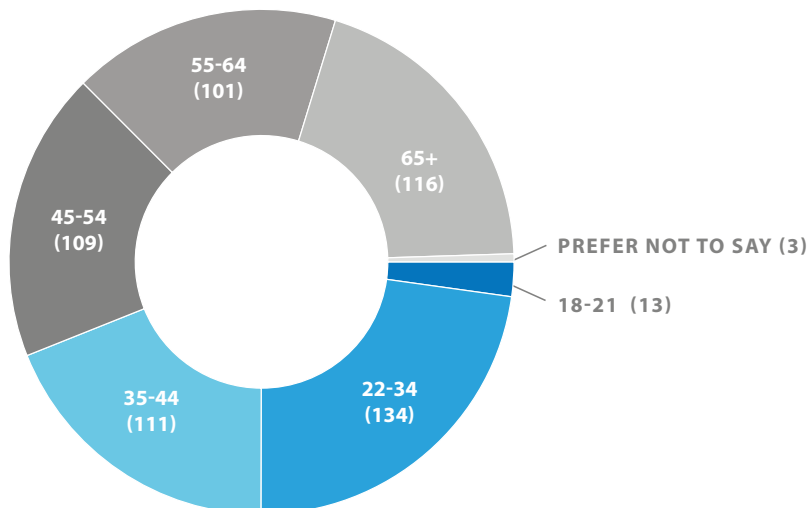


# Data and Demographics

## Data

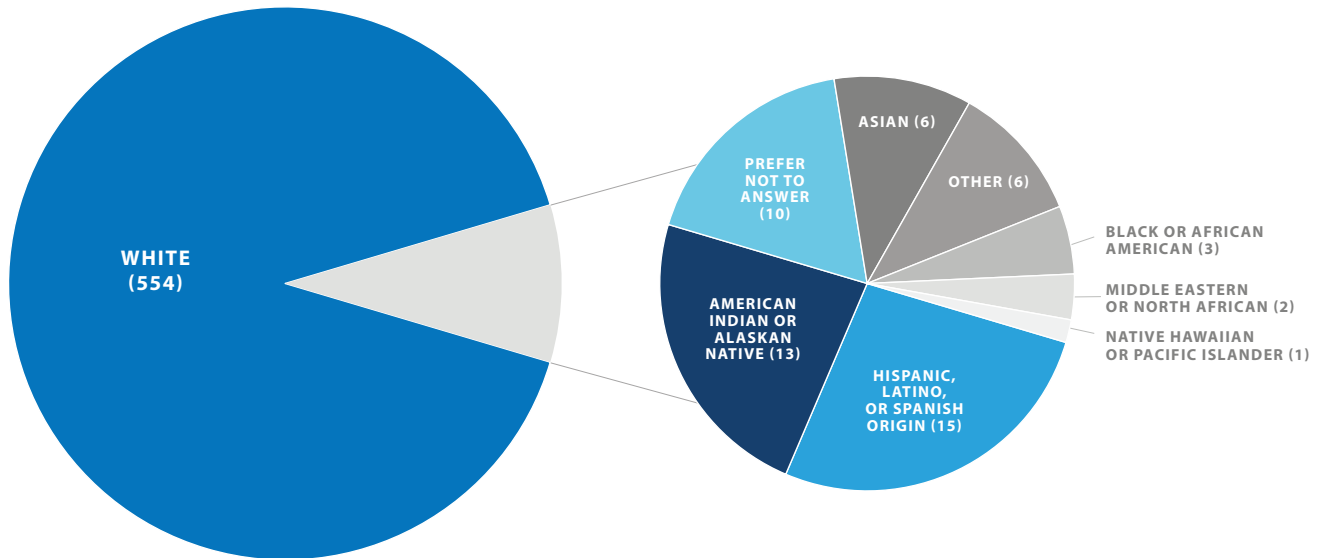
The data in this report is generally presented as a summary for all participants across the county. In some cases community specific results are reported and labeled according to local respondents. The rural communities category includes Amsterdam, Manhattan, Churchill, Willow Creek and Three Forks. Our survey was 100% voluntary, therefore not all respondents answered all questions, resulting in different response numbers on each question. For a more detailed look, we encourage you to [download the raw data](#) for review or further analysis.

## Age

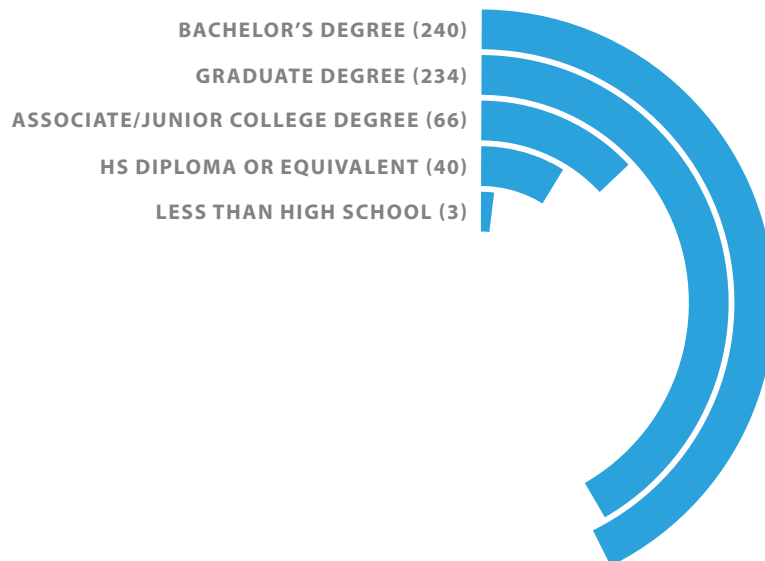


# Data and Demographics

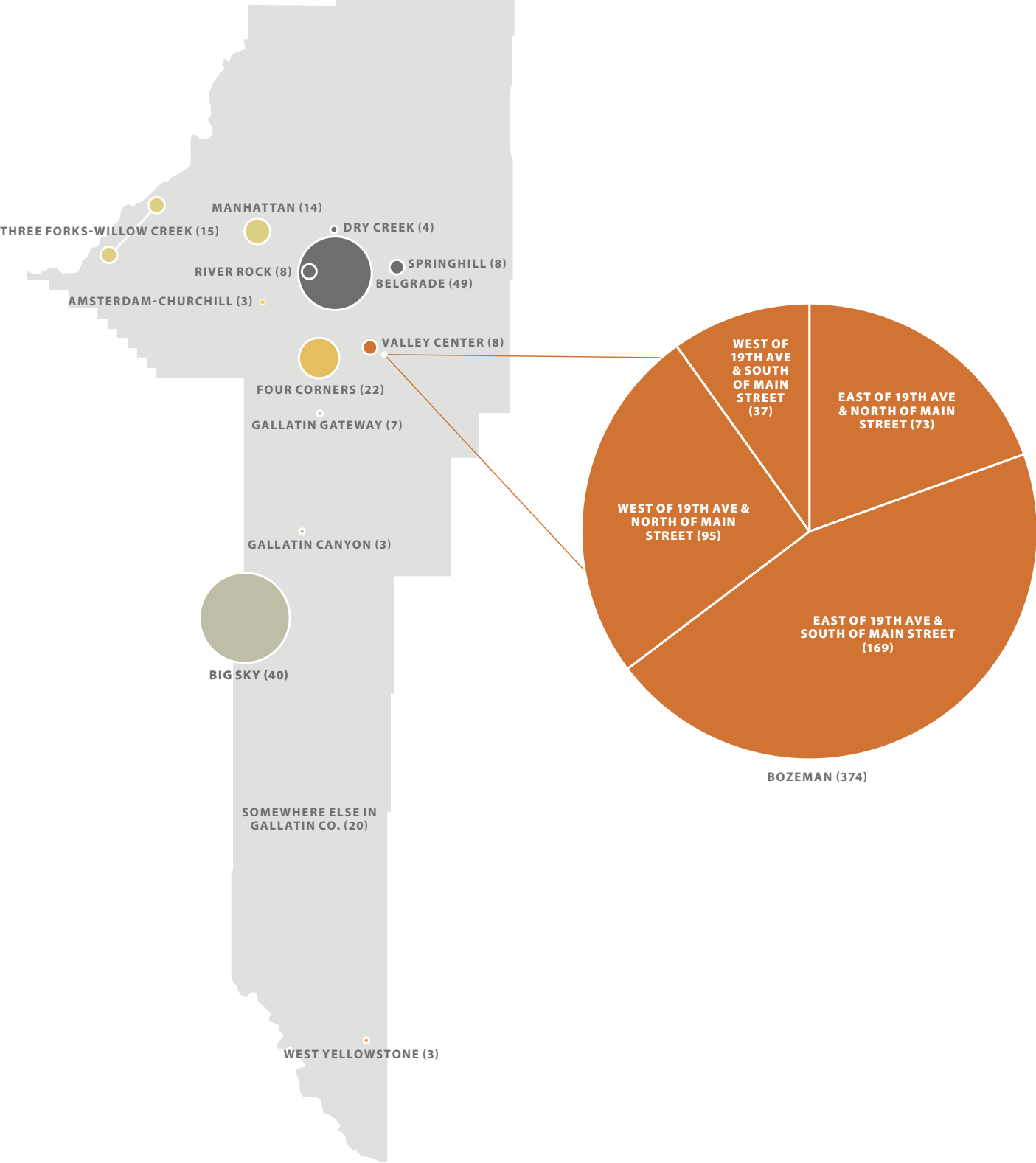
## Ethnicity



## Education



# Respondent Location





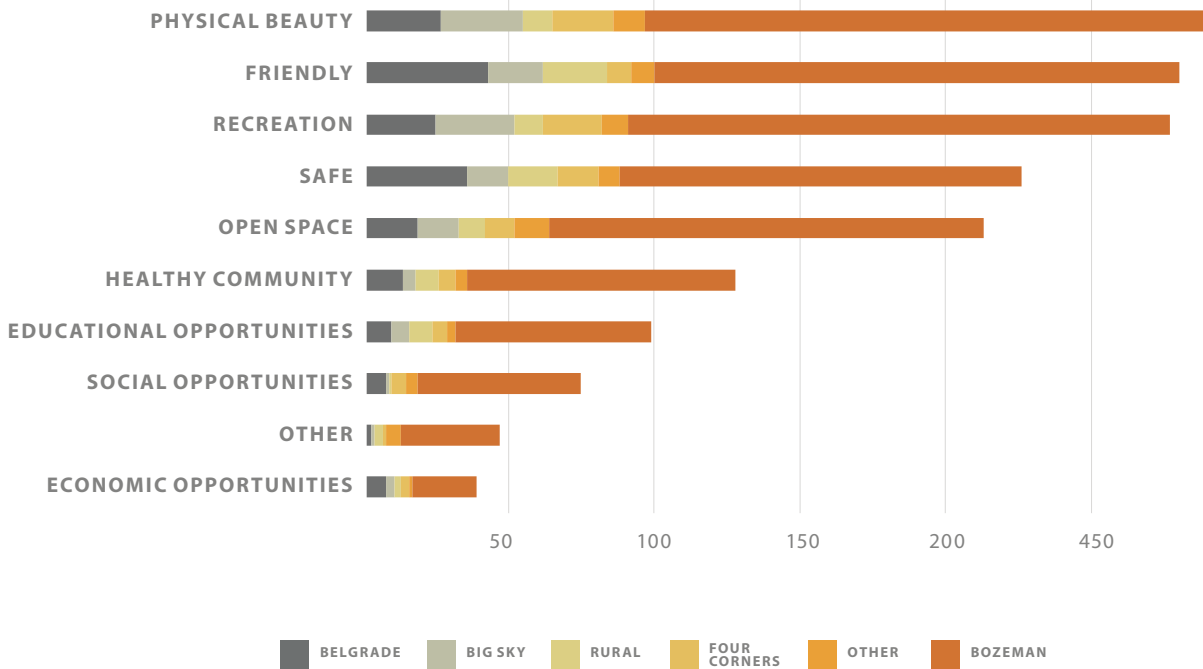
# Respondent Location

BELGRADE	BELGRADE	8.48%	49
	DRY CREEK	0.69%	4
	RIVER ROCK	1.38%	8
	SPRINGHILL	1.38%	8
BIG SKY	BIG SKY	6.92%	40
	GALLATIN CANYON	0.52%	3
RURAL	AMSTERDAM-CHURCHILL	0.52%	3
	MANHATTAN	2.42%	14
	THREE FORKS-WILLOW CREEK	2.60%	15
OTHER	SOMEWHERE ELSE IN GALLATIN COUNTY	3.46%	20
	WEST YELLOWSTONE	0.52%	3
FOUR CORNERS	GALLATIN GATEWAY	1.21%	7
	FOUR CORNERS	3.81%	22
BOZEMAN	BOZEMAN: WEST OF 19TH & NORTH OF MAIN	16.44%	95
	BOZEMAN: WEST OF 19TH & SOUTH OF MAIN	6.40%	37
	BOZEMAN: EAST OF 19TH & NORTH OF MAIN	12.63%	73
	BOZEMAN: EAST OF 19TH & SOUTH OF MAIN	29.24%	169
	VALLEY CENTER	1.38%	8

# Love for the Community

QUESTION:

**What do you love most about your community?  
(Choose your top 3)**



"The outdoors. The environment. The mountains."

"Our community is large enough to have diversity and an economy that can support professionals, but it still feels like a tight knit community."

"The people here are so passionate, come together and truly love our community."

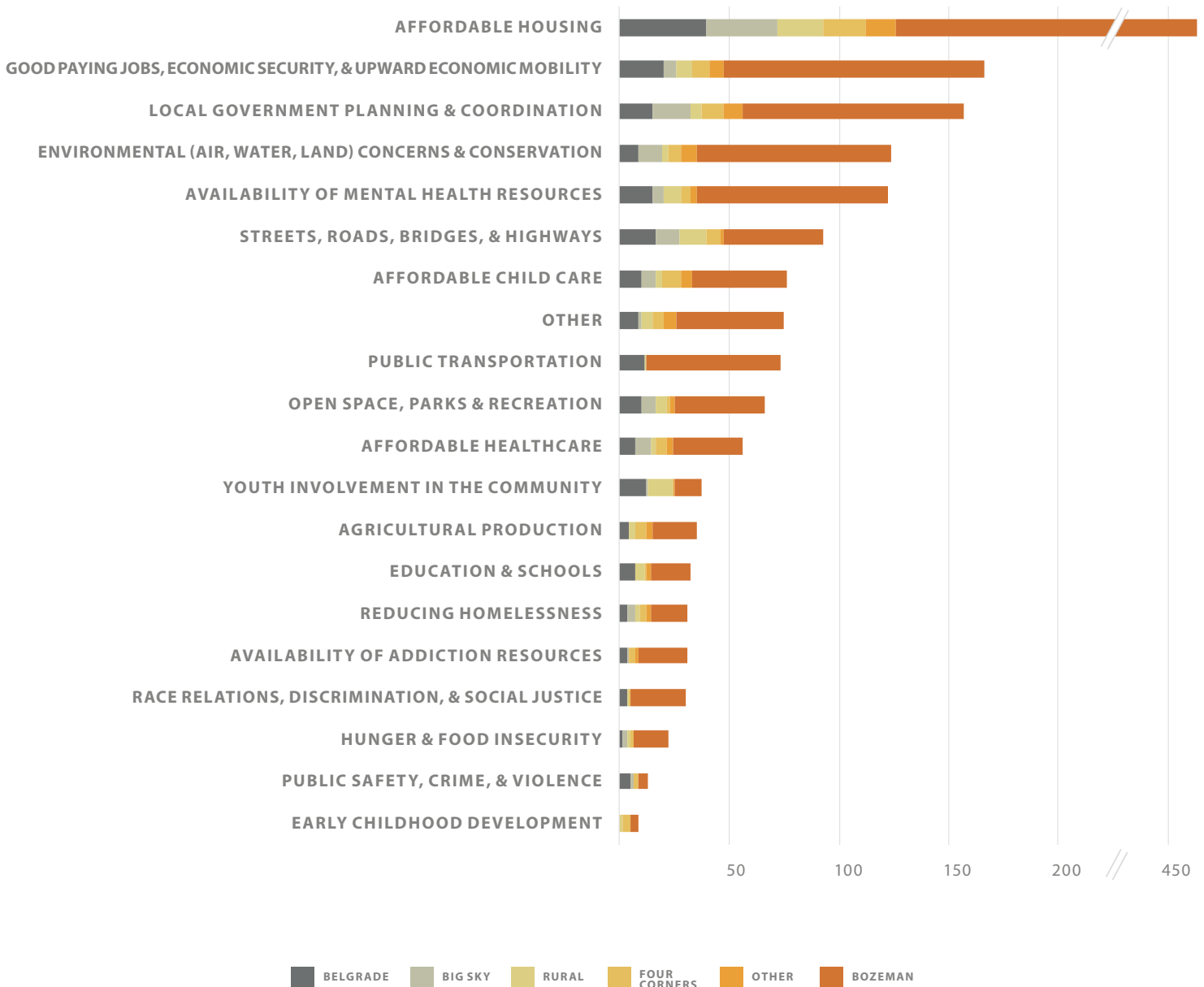
"Vibrant downtown in a naturally beautiful environment"



# Community Challenges

QUESTION:

**What are the most pressing challenges in your community? (Choose your top 3)**



# Community Knowledge and Goals

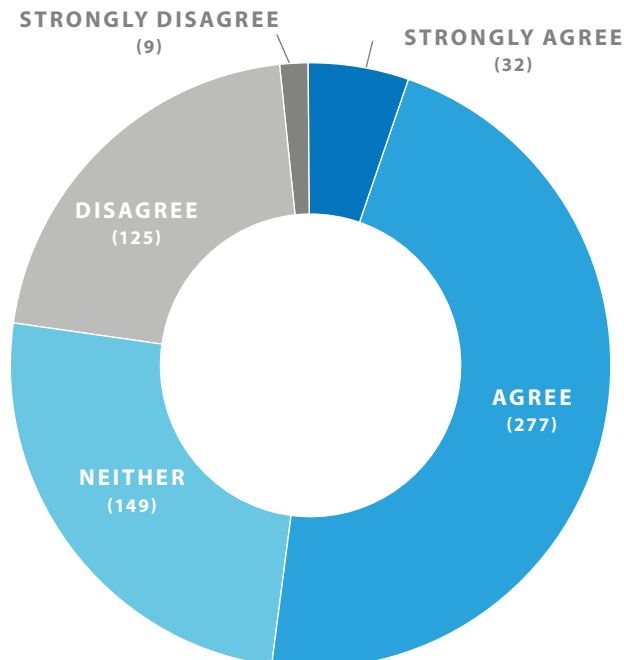
QUESTION:

**Which of the following are your primary means of learning about the community?  
(Choose your top 3)**



QUESTION:

**Residents have shared goals and priorities for our community.**



# Sense of Community

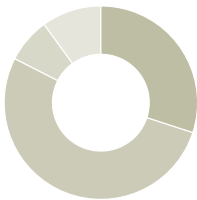
QUESTION:

The area in which I live has a strong sense of community.



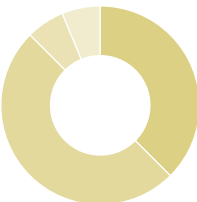
### BELGRADE

STRONGLY DISAGREE	2
DISAGREE	7
NEITHER	12
AGREE	41
STRONGLY AGREE	6



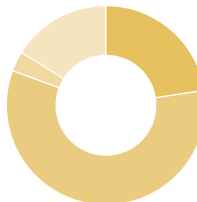
### BIG SKY

STRONGLY DISAGREE	0
DISAGREE	4
NEITHER	3
AGREE	21
STRONGLY AGREE	12



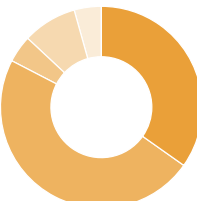
### RURAL

STRONGLY DISAGREE	0
DISAGREE	2
NEITHER	2
AGREE	16
STRONGLY AGREE	12



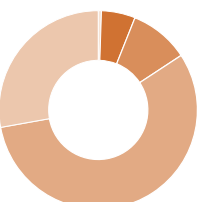
### OTHER

STRONGLY DISAGREE	1
DISAGREE	2
NEITHER	1
AGREE	11
STRONGLY AGREE	8



### FOUR CORNERS

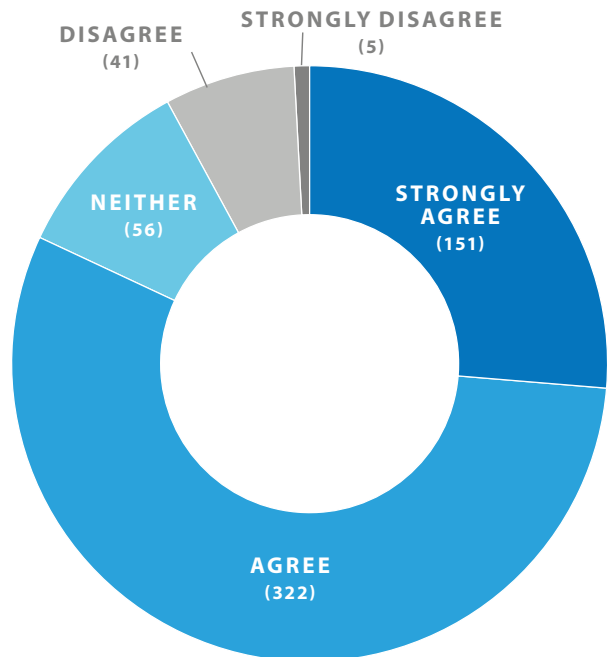
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0
DISAGREE	5
NEITHER	1
AGREE	18
STRONGLY AGREE	7



### BOZEMAN

STRONGLY DISAGREE	2
DISAGREE	21
NEITHER	37
AGREE	215
STRONGLY AGREE	106

### ALL RESPONDENTS



# Improving the Community

QUESTION:

**What are your ideas for making your community better?**

During a Seat at the Table, we received many ideas on how community members hoped to make their community better. The scale of these ideas ranged from a local neighborhood improvements to regional programs that would serve community needs. The diverse ideas ranged from recycling initiatives to community gardens, from affordable housing to mental health program ideas. More ideas can be explored through our qualitative data that can be found in the "Conversation Summaries" report located on our website.



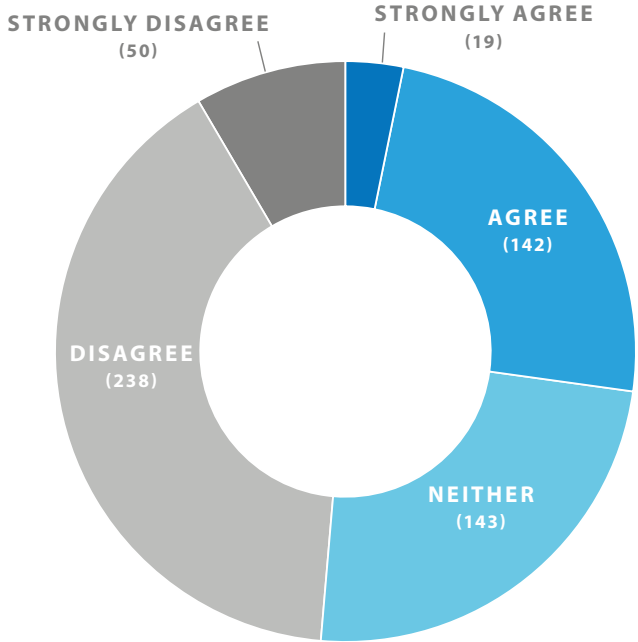
What are your ideas to make your community better?

collaboration  
enhance non-motorized  
connectivity  
enhance the "brand" of the  
city.  
develop leadership + engagement  
"Leadership Belgrade Group"  
Promote + Support small business growth  
Educate and invite people into the process.  
Effective mechanism for community dialog in Belgrade (specifically -  
not countywide)  
Urban Renewal District as  
vehicle for funding -

# Opportunity for All

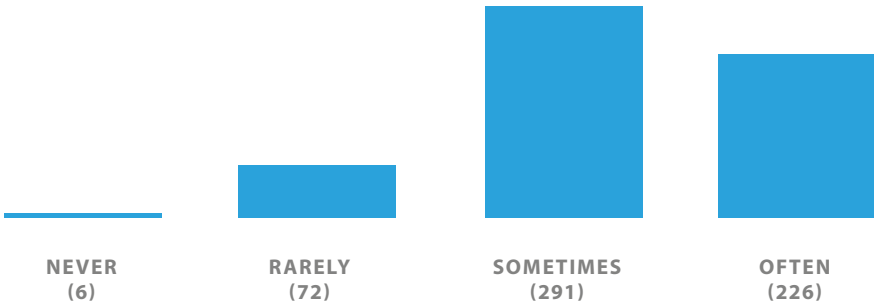
QUESTION:

**Our community provides opportunities for everyone.**



QUESTION:

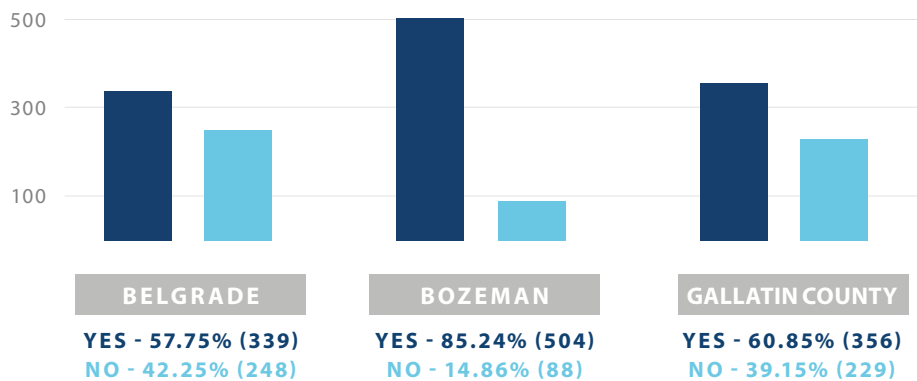
**How often have you been able to take part in community events or celebrations?**



# Growth

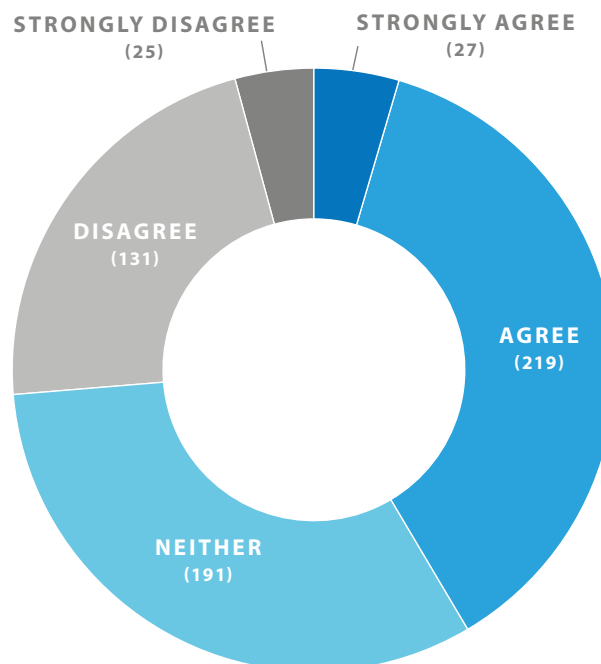
QUESTION:

**Were you aware that each of the following is in the process of creating new plans for future growth?**



QUESTION:

**Our community is changing for the better.**





# Inspired to take action

*"More conversations are necessary. More events like Seat at the Table where [we] can voice [our] opinions and feel heard."*



*"Our 'table' individually and as a group was inspired to take action and do something to improve their neighborhood like cleaning up around the neighborhood on a regular basis. We talked about doing something as a group to help someone else or improve the community in some small way and not wait for the local government or "someone else" to do it; one idea that came out of this was to inspire all the 'seats at the table' groups to commit to doing something positive in their community."*

# Positive Impact

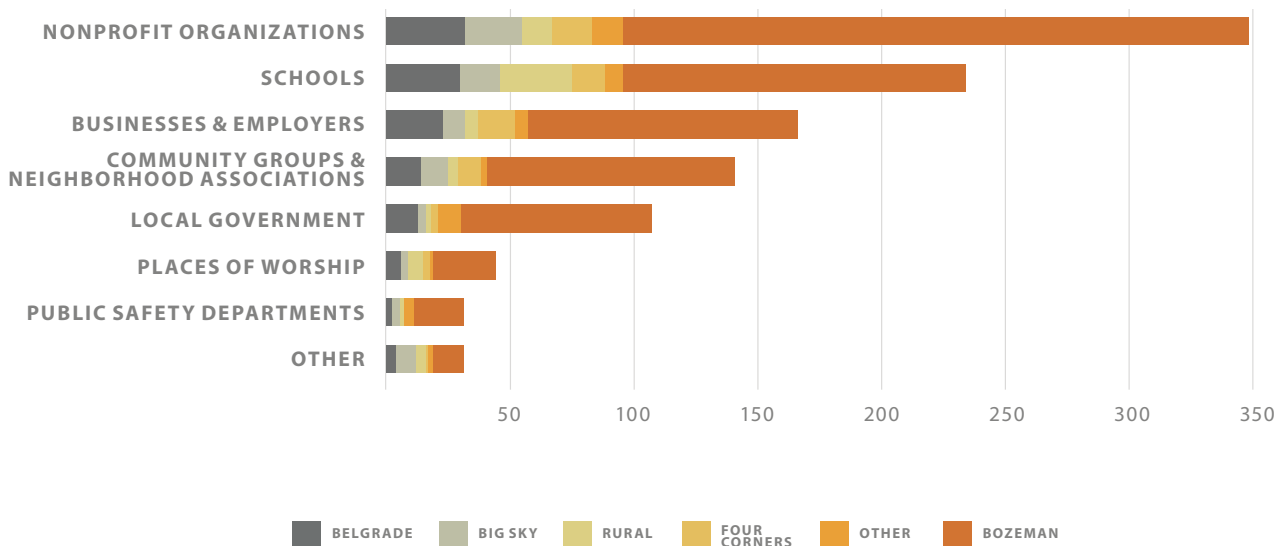
QUESTION:

**How much impact do you believe people like you have in making your community a better place?**



QUESTION:

**Who do you believe is having the greatest positive impact on your community?  
(Choose your top 2)**





## Thank you to our Steering Committee and Donors:

**STEERING COMMITTEE:** ALISON HARMON, BRIDGET WILKINSON, CATHY COSTAKIS,  
JENNIFER BOYER, RANDY CARPENTER, AND TIFFANY MAIERLE

**DONORS:** BILL COCHRAN, BOZEMAN AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, CATHY COSTAKIS,  
FUTURE WEST, GALLATIN COUNTY, JENNIFER BOYER, JIM MADDEN,  
LEADERSHIP MONTANA, MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, THE CITY OF BELGRADE,  
THE CITY OF BOZEMAN, AND TOWNSEND COLLECTIVE



# So why does this matter?

Why would we invest all of this time and energy into doing this simple initiative? Because it works. There are community foundations large and small all around the US that have hosted similar initiatives with community partners that have yielded powerful results and outcomes.

Our community is growing and changing. We all know this. At times we all feel this tension of growth. This act of coming together has never been more important. There is no single business, city or county entity, nonprofit or neighborhood that can address our community challenges and opportunities alone.

## What does success look like for A Seat at the Table?

Success for this initiative would be more engaged community members that feel a sense of ownership over our future. Success would be all of us leveraging this community member feedback that businesses, nonprofits and city and county leaders can all use to make more informed decisions about our work. Success would be inspired action that stems from these conversations. Success would be moving these ideas generated at these tables to our neighborhoods by all of us pitching in.

